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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Sixty-first session
Vienna, 20–29 June 2018

Draft report

Chapter III

Recommendations and decisions

C. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its fifty-fifth session

10. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

1. The Committee took note of the discussion by the Subcommittee under the item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, as reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (see A/AC.105/1167, paras. 252–274).

2. The Committee endorsed the recommendations and decisions on the item endorsed by the Subcommittee regarding the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, reconvened under the chairmanship of Peter Martinez (South Africa) (see A/AC.105/1167, para. 274).

3. The Committee had before it the following:

(a) Note by the Secretariat entitled "Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities" (A/AC.105/L.315);

(b) Conference room paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities" (A/AC.105/2018/CRP.20);

(c) Conference room paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Draft guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities" (A/AC.105/2018/CRP.21);

(d) Conference room paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities" (A/AC.105/2018/CRP.22);

(e) Conference room paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Final Report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities" (A/AC.105/2018/CRP.22/Rev.1);

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(f) Conference room paper by Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America entitled "Long-term sustainability of outer space activities: Proposal to adopt and refer to the General Assembly for endorsement the Compendium of Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities" (A/AC.105/2018/CRP.26, A/AC.105/2018/CRP.26/Rev.1 and A/AC.105/2018/CRP.26/Rev.2);

(g) Non-paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Possible layout scheme for a compendium of guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities based on the already agreed texts from A/AC.105/L.315";

(h) Non-paper by the Chair of the Working Group entitled "Possible language for the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space";

(i) Non-paper by Switzerland entitled "Proposal for the establishment of a new working group on safety and transparency in space activities".

4. The Committee agreed that the long-term sustainability of outer space activities was an important topic, noting that the international space community was looking for leadership in this area.

5. The Committee noted that the Chair of the Working Group had held brainstorming sessions on the margins of the UNISPACE+50 symposium to provide delegations with an opportunity to exchange ideas on how to conclude the work under the Working Group's current mandate and how to carry forward discussions on topics for future consideration after the sixty-first session of the Committee.

6. The Committee noted that, during the present session of the Committee, the Working Group had met and used available interpretation services, and that the Chair of the Working Group and interested delegations had held extensive informal consultations.

7. The Committee noted that the Working Group had undertaken eight years of substantial work and expressed its appreciation for the time and energy invested by the Working Group members, the members of the expert groups and the members of the informal translation and terminology reference group. In particular, the Committee commended the Chair of the Working Group for his tireless efforts.

8. The Committee recalled the Working Group's extended programme of work (see A/71/20, para. 137) and noted that during its mandate, the Working Group had reached consensus on a preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/2018/CRP.20).

9. The Committee noted that, while the Working Group had not been able to conclude its consideration of all guidelines within its current mandate, discussions had continued at the current session of the Committee on a number of draft guidelines for which consensus was not reached, and that this progress was reflected in conference room paper A/AC.105/2018/CRP.21.

10. The Committee encouraged States and international intergovernmental organizations to consider implementing guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities on a voluntary basis, and to share their experiences with implementation under the Subcommittee's agenda item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

11. The Committee took note of the section in the preamble entitled "Review of implementation and updating of the guidelines" (A/AC.105/2018/CRP.20, paras. 21–24) and noted that it was important to develop clear procedures for: (a) sharing experiences, practices and lessons learned from implementing the guidelines; (b) reviewing and updating the guidelines; and (c) introducing and considering new candidate guidelines.

12. The Committee noted that the Working Group had discussed various options for continuing work related to the topic of the long-term sustainability of outer space

activities, including extending the current Working Group by one year with a mandate to carry out specific tasks and creating a new working group on safety and transparency in space activities. However, at the present session, the Working Group had not been able to reach a consensus on the details of any proposal.

13. The Committee noted that States members of the Committee may develop further written proposals on ways to continue work on the topic of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, that such proposals may be considered at the fifty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and, as warranted, at the fifty-eighth session of the Legal Subcommittee. Such proposals could address, inter alia: topics for further consideration as identified by the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities; options for enhanced information exchange on space objects and events; and the possible establishment of a working mechanism with an associated multi-year work-plan.

14. The Committee noted that at the present session, the Working Group had discussed its report, that the Chair had produced working papers containing drafts of the final Working Group report (A/AC.105/2018/CRP.22 and A/AC.105/2018/CRP.22/Rev.1), but that the Working Group had been unable to reach consensus on the text of its final report.

15. The Committee noted that the Working Group had discussed, but had not been able to reach consensus on how to refer the preamble and guidelines on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities to the General Assembly.